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Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
P.O. Box 19275
Springfield, IL 62794-9275

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EPA

What You Should Know About Your Auto Emissions Warranty

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Emission control warranties protect you, the vehicle owner, from the cost of repairs for emission related failures that are beyond your control. Manufacturers are required by federal law to provide broad emission warranty coverage for vehicles that are less than five years old and have been operated for less than 50,000 miles.

There are two emission control warranties, the "Design and Defect Warranty" and the "Performance Warranty." The Performance Warranty covers repairs which are required because the vehicle failed an emission test. If you are a resident of an area with an Inspection/Maintenance program that meets federal guidelines, you may be eligible for this additional Performance Warranty protection. Ask your local Inspection/ Maintenance program or write to EPA for a copy of the pamphlet "If Your Car Just Failed An Emission Test...You May Be Entitled To Free Repairs," which describes the Performance Warranty in detail. The Design and Defect Warranty, described in this pamphlet, covers repair of emission control related parts which become defective during the first five years or 50,000 miles of vehicle use.

According to federal law, if...

- Your car is less than 5 years old and has less than 50,000 miles; and
- An original equipment part or system fails because of a defect in materials or workmanship; and
- The failure would cause your car to exceed federal emissions standards; then...

the car manufacturer must repair or replace the defective part free of charge. This is the protection given car owners under the Emissions Design and Defect Warranty required by the Clean Air Act.

This pamphlet, published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will answer some of your questions about the warranty and give you a general understanding of what it does, and does not, cover.

The emissions warranty applies to all motor vehicles manufactured since 1972, including cars, pick-ups, recreational vehicles, heavy-duty trucks, and motorcycles. However, the length of your warranty coverage, as expressed by a time or mileage limitation called "useful life," may be different for each type of vehicle. For example, the warranty or useful life for cars is five years or 50,000 miles, whichever occurs first. To determine the length of warranty coverage that applies to your vehicle, look for the emissions warranty description in your owner's manual or warranty booklet.

Beginning with cars manufactured in the 1972 model year, you will find an explanation of the emissions warranty in your owner's manual or warranty booklet.

Under the law, each manufacturer must honor the warranty if the three conditions listed above occur. All manufacturers have established procedures to provide owners with this warranty coverage. If you do not understand the meaning of the warranty or the procedures you must follow to obtain warranty coverage, contact your car dealer or the manufacturer's zone or regional representative.

Does The Emissions Warranty Apply To Used Cars?

Yes. It does not matter if you bought your car new or used, from a dealer or anyone else. As long as your vehicle has not exceeded the warranty time or mileage limitations, this warranty applies.

What Parts or Repairs Are Covered By The Emissions Warranty?

Coverage includes: (1) any part whose primary purpose is to control emissions, and (2) any part that has an effect on emissions.

To aid in identifying specific parts in your car, the two categories are listed (see below). They are further divided into systems, with a list of the major parts in each system.

Often, parts are given different names by different manufacturers. One manufacturer may use more parts than another, so the following list may not be complete for all vehicles.

Emission Control Parts

Exhaust Gas Conversion Systems

- oxygen sensor
- catalytic converter
- thermal reactor
- dual-walled exhaust pipe

Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR) System; including

- EGR valve
- EGR solenoid
- EGR backpressure transducer
- thermal vacuum switch
- EGR spacer plate
- sensor and switches used to control EGR flow

Evaporative Emission Control System

- purge valve
- purge solenoid
- fuel filler cap
- vapor storage canister and filter

Positive Crankcase Ventilation (PCV) System

- PCV valve
- PCV solenoid

Air Injection System

- diverter, bypass or gulp valve
- reed valve
- air pump
- anti-backfire or deceleration valve

Early Fuel Evaporative (EFE) System

- EFE valve
- heat riser valve
- thermal vacuum switch

Fuel Metering Systems

- electronic control module or computer command module
- deceleration controls
- fuel injectors, fuel injection units and fuel injection bars developed for feedback EFI or TBI systems
- mixture control solenoid, diaphragm or other fuel metering components that achieve closed-loop operation
- EFI air flow meter, module or mixture control unit
- electronic choke
- altitude compensator sensor
- mixture settings on sealed carburetors
- other feedback control sensors, switches and valves

Air Induction System

- thermostatically controlled air cleaner
- air box

Ignition Systems

- electronic spark advance
- high energy electronic ignition
- timing advance/retard systems

Miscellaneous Parts

- Hoses, gaskets, brackets, clamps and other accessories used in the above systems.

Emissions Related Parts

Emissions Related Parts: There are other parts of your car which have a primary purpose other than emissions control, but which nevertheless have significant effects on your car's emissions. If any of these parts fail to function or function improperly, your car's emissions may exceed federal standards. Therefore, when any of the parts of the following systems are defective in materials or workmanship and have failed in a way that would be likely to cause your car's emissions to exceed federal standards, they should be repaired or replaced under the emissions warranty:

Carburetor System

- carburetor
- choke

Fuel Injection System

- fuel distributor

Air Induction System

- turbo charger
- intake manifold

Exhaust System

- exhaust manifold

Ignition System

- distributor
- ignition wires and coil
- spark plugs

Miscellaneous Parts

- Hoses, gaskets, brackets, clamps, and other accessories used in the above systems.

Can Any Portion of An Emissions Warranty Repair Be Charged To Me?

When a manufacturer repairs or replaces any part under the emissions warranty, you may not be charged for any labor, parts or miscellaneous items that are necessary to complete the repair. For example, if a manufacturer agrees to replace a catalytic converter under the emissions warranty, you should not be charged for the catalyst nor for any pipes, brackets, adjustments or labor needed to complete the replacement.

How Long Does The Emissions Warranty Apply To Individual Parts Of My Car?

- Parts that do not have a stated replacement interval in the maintenance instructions are warranted for the "useful life" of the vehicle. For cars this would be five years or 50,000 miles, whichever occurs first. For vehicles other than cars, read your warranty description in the owner's manual or warranty booklet to determine the length of warranty coverage (useful life).

- Parts with a stated replacement interval, such as, "replace at 15,000 miles or 12 months," are warranted up to the first replacement point only.

- Finally, parts that are the subject of a maintenance instruction that requires them to be, "checked and replaced if necessary," or the subject of any similar requirement, are warranted for the entire period of warranty coverage.

How Do I Know Whether I Am Entitled to Coverage Under The Emissions Warranty?

If you or a reliable mechanic can show that a part in one of the listed systems is defective, it is probably covered under the emissions warranty. When you believe you have identified a defective part that may be covered you should make a warranty claim to the person identified by the manufacturer in your owner's manual or warranty booklet.

What Should I Do If My First Attempt To Obtain Warranty Coverage Is Denied?

If your first attempt to receive emissions warranty coverage is denied, you should then:

- Ask for a complete reason, in writing, for the denial of emissions warranty coverage; and

- Ask for the name(s) of the person(s) involved in the denial, including anyone from the manufacturer's regional or zone office; and

- Ask for the name(s) of the person(s) you should contact to appeal the denial of coverage under the emissions warranty.

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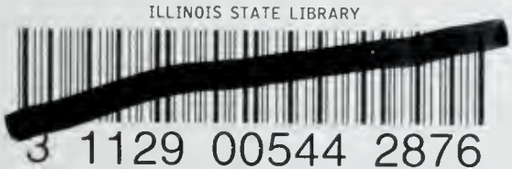

Once you have attempted to obtain this information and you are not satisfied with the warranty claim determination, you should contact the person designated in your owner's manual or warranty booklet by the manufacturer for warranty assistance.

How Can Maintenance Affect My Emissions Warranty Coverage?

Performance of scheduled maintenance is your responsibility. You are expected to either perform scheduled maintenance yourself or have a qualified repair facility perform it for you. If a part failure is a direct result of your car not being maintained or used according to the manufacturer's recommendations as found in your owner's manual or maintenance booklet, the manufacturer may not be required to repair or replace the failed part under the emissions warranty. Remember, to assure the maximum benefits of your emissions control system in reducing air pollution, as well as to assure continued warranty coverage, you should have all scheduled maintenance performed.

Do I Have to Show Any Maintenance Receipts Before I Can Make An Emissions Warranty Claim?

No. Proof of maintenance is not required in order to obtain coverage under the emissions warranty. If a qualifying part is defective in materials or workmanship, the manufacturer must provide warranty coverage. However, not all part failures are caused by a defect in materials or workmanship. An obvious example is a part failure caused by the car being involved in an accident.

You are not automatically required to show maintenance receipts when you make a warranty claim. However, when it is likely that the lack of scheduled maintenance has caused the particular part failure, you may be asked to show that scheduled maintenance was performed. When you make a warranty claim, keep in mind that you may be asked for proof that maintenance was performed only when lack of maintenance could have caused a part to fail.

How Will My Warranty Be Affected If I Use Leaded Gasoline In My Car?

When leaded gas is used in cars requiring unleaded, the emissions controls (particularly the catalyst) may be deactivated. In addition, lead deposits will form inside the engine and, under certain circumstances, may contribute to the failure of an engine part. The emissions warranty does not cover any part failures that result from the use of leaded fuel in a car that requires unleaded fuel.

Are Dealers The Only Persons Allowed To Perform Scheduled Maintenance Recommended By The Manufacturer?

No. Scheduled maintenance servicing may be performed by anyone who is qualified. You may even maintain the car yourself, as long as the maintenance is performed according to the manufacturer's instructions provided with the car.

For your protection, before taking your car to a repair facility to have any maintenance performed, check your maintenance booklet and make a list of all of the scheduled

maintenance. We then suggest that you do not merely ask for a "tune-up", or a "12,000 mile servicing". Instead, specify all required servicing to the person who will perform the maintenance. The specific list of maintenance work to be performed should be entered on the work order or receipt that you receive. This provides a clear record that all scheduled maintenance has been performed.

If I Need Replacement Parts, Must I Use The Car Manufacturer's Parts Only?

No. A manufacturer cannot require the use of any specific brand of parts in the maintenance of your car. However, the manufacturer can require you to use parts that are of equal quality to the original ones.

If I Buy A Used Car, How Do I Know Whether It Has Been Maintained According To The Maintenance Schedule?

The best way to learn whether the car has been maintained according to its schedule is to ask the seller to give you the receipts proving that all of the scheduled maintenance was performed. Having the receipts on hand will provide necessary evidence if the question of maintenance arises. To prevent any loss of your car's emissions performance, you should continue to conform to the maintenance schedule in the owner's manual or warranty booklet.

You should also ask the seller for the owner's manual, warranty or maintenance booklet, and any other information that came with the vehicle when it was new. If the seller does not have these documents, you can obtain them from the manufacturer.

What Do I Do If The Manufacturer Will Not Honor What I Believe To Be A Valid Emissions Warranty Claim?

If your car has a defect in any of the components listed previously, you should contact an authorized warranty representative and follow the procedures outlined earlier. If that person denies your warranty claim, contact the person designated by the manufacturer for further warranty assistance.

You are entitled to pursue any independent legal actions you consider appropriate to obtain coverage under the emissions warranty as discussed in this pamphlet. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency is authorized to investigate the failure of manufacturers to comply with the terms of this warranty. If you have followed your manufacturer's procedures for making a warranty claim as set out in your owner's manual or warranty booklet and you are not satisfied with the manufacturer's determination, you are encouraged to contact EPA by writing:

Warranty Complaint
Field Operations and Support Division (EN-397F)
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D C 20460

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In Summary:

If a part in a listed system is defective:

Present a warranty claim to an authorized warranty representative.

If your warranty claim is denied:

Ask for the reason for the denial, in writing.

Follow the appeal procedures in your owner's manual.

If you are not satisfied with the manufacturer's decision:

You are encouraged to contact EPA, which investigates the failure of car manufacturers to comply with the terms of the emissions warranty.

Keep This Pamphlet With Your Car For Future Reference.

EPA is charged by Congress to protect the Nation's land, air and water systems. Under a mandate of national environmental laws focused on air and water quality, solid waste management and the control of toxic substances, pesticides, noise and radiation, the Agency strives to formulate and implement actions which lead to a compatible balance between human activities and the ability of natural systems to support and nurture life.